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*The Christian's Golden Chain; or, the Divine
Human Titles of the Lord.*

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED

AT THE
NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE,
IN RED-CROSS-STREET,

NEAR CRIPPLEGATE, LONDON,

Dec. 27, 1795=39,

ON ISAIAH IX. 6.

FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS
GIVEN, AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS
SHOULDER: AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WON-
DERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVER-
LASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

BY MANOAH SIBLY, N.H.S.
AND SERVANT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.



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SERMON II.

THE

CHRISTIAN'S GOLDEN CHAIN;

OR, THE

DIVINE AND HUMAN TITLES OF THE LORD.

ISAIAH IX. 6.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

THAT these words contain a prophecy, of Jehovah manifesting himself in our nature, born of the Virgin, needs no proof; because they carry their own evidence, and have always been considered in that point of view. It also appears as if it was impossible to mistake the person of whom they are

A 2 spoken;

spoken; there being but one person alone, in whom the ideas—the character—here proclaimed, can meet; namely, in the only Jehovah of the Old Testament, who became the Jesus of the New; thus the Child born, the Son given, upon whose shoulder the government of heaven and earth is placed; the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Each of which characters and names, we will, as mercifully assisted, attempt briefly to illustrate, from the light of the Lord, now opened in his Word.

The first declaration we behold in our text is, as rendered by our translators, *to us a Child is born*. But the Hebrew word, here used for child, imports particularly a boy or man-child. Here it may be necessary to observe, that the Word of the Lord knows nothing of the idea of a part of the Deity, or a separate person, taking manhood upon himself, for our salvation. But the only Jehovah, agreeable to the language of Isaiah's prophecy, chap. xliii. 11, *I, even I, am the Lord* (Jehovah),

(Jehovah), *and beside me there is no Saviour.* Also, in chap. xlv. 21, *There is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.* And although Divine Omniscience knew, that mankind, at the time of the end of the first christian dispensation, would separate the Saviour of mankind from the Father; yet that this should not be done by the true church, established at his second advent; that then the mists of darkness and perplexity, with which the minds of the well disposed were overwhelmed, should be dissipated by the revelation of the glory of the Lord, is sweetly prophesied of by Zach. xiv. 9, *In that day the Lord (Jehovah) shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord (Jehovah), and his name one.* A prophecy never fully accomplished till this day, in which the Lord has formed a new heaven and a new church, who alone acknowledge him as all in all; adopting the language of the apostle Paul, without any reservation whatever, that in Jesus Christ dwelleth **ALL THE FULNESS of the Godhead bodily.**

The reason why it is said, a boy or man-child was born, is, because a boy or a man-child, as the male principle, corresponds to divine good; and the Lord, although he came forth as divine truth, was essential divine good in himself, in consequence of his soul being not only from the Father, but the very Father in him; hence his love being underived love, the word here used for child is in the masculine gender; whilst, whenever the church is spoken of, as to her love, which is all derived from him, she is always spoken of in the feminine gender, being called a woman, a wife, a daughter, a virgin. The reason is, because love's fountain in itself is a male love, whilst all derived love is female love. This difference in love, as existing in the male and in the female, is the true reason of the difference of the sexes, and also is the reason of the apparent superiority existing between Adam and Eve, in regard to their creation, as related in the book of Genesis; the man being created immediately by and from the Lord, therefore his love is more interior; and the woman being made out of or from man, her love is more

more exterior. Not that as conjugal pairs, between husband and wife, there should be any assumption of dominion, because each acting from, and being left as in freedom in their peculiar duties, is the very bond of love, whilst all coercion is it's destruction.

It is from this distinction between male love as the fountain, and female love as the stream, that our Lord, in the words before us, is called a boy or man-child; being so called in respect to his divine love, or the Father which was in him even from conception; as he is afterwards called a Son, with respect to divine truth, which proceeds from and is the form of divine good, or as to the divine human proceeding from the essential divine.

That the Lord was essential divine love, or goodness, may be proved from the account of his very conception, as recorded by Luke, (i. 35.) where we are told, that the angel Gabriel saluted Mary as the highly favoured of the Lord, telling her *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power*

of the Highest shall overshadow thee; wherefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God; the Lord there being called a Son, in relation to his coming into the world, as divine truth; but as his internal life and soul still was divine good, he is called the Son of God; the word God, in the New Testament, always having relation to the Lord as to divine good or love.

The Lord is called a Son, in regard to divine truth; because divine truth is nothing but divine good in form and existence; the same as the Son in the Deity, is the Father in form and existence. Hence, whether we say the Father, the essential divine, divine love or goodness, it is the same; so also the Son, the divine human, divine wisdom or truth: the former all relating to the esse, the life and soul of the Deity; the latter to the existence, body, and form; both centering, since Jehovah's assumption and glorification of the human, in the one person of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This

This Son in our text is said to be given, the same as in other parts of the Word, he is said to be sent, and which to such who have not heretofore been accustomed to think alone of God, as one in essence and in person, may appear as if it carried somewhat of an objection to what has been observed of Jesus Christ alone being the only God, the Father, as well as the Son. Those who cannot divest their minds of conceiving that there is a trinity of persons in the Godhead, will be apt to catch at every little straw to confirm their ideas; but on the contrary, those who see no God in heaven or on earth, but the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, giving full credit to that testimony of our Lord, that the scriptures all testify of him, they can see the propriety of the Son being said to be given or sent, in regard to the appearance which took place, in consequence of the descent of the human or divine truth into the world from divine good, but yet not so separated but the unity of the Godhead is preserved entire, divine good or the Father being always so united to divine truth or the Son, as the soul is to the body;

body; and this we may do, if, in viewing of the Deity in all his operations, we divest ourselves of time as well as space.

We are now called to contemplate for whom it was, that Jehovah entered into a state of humiliation, in being born as a man-child, and gave himself as a Son.—*It was for us.* This is language that every man in the universe, as well as every angel in heaven, may apply to himself; because each alike is the subject of this redemption; for each he entertains the same impartiality, he desires, for ever did, and for ever will desire all men to be saved, and come to him as the fountain of life and salvation; and when the way was impeded, through the progress and depravity of the fall, we behold him take humanity upon himself, redeeming not only men, but angels also; by removing the evil spirits in the spiritual world from their strong holds, hurling satans headlong down from their fanciful heavens, subduing them by his all-powerful arm, that they should not for ever destroy the souls of men upon earth, by spreading amongst them their evil influ-

ence; and also delivered the very angels, because possessing some external truths from the Word, they were able to penetrate their wicked sphere into the very heavens of the angels.

Did he effect this for mankind at his first coming? Behold him performing the very same acts of redemption at his second, and this for us; these words, if possible, being with more propriety applicable to us; because the Lord has now made his second advent, and the revelation of the glories of the Word being farther opened, whereby the New Jerusalem dispensation may arrive at higher degrees in the Lord's body, the grand man of heaven, and the church, than it was possible for the first christians to attain; the Lord for the most part sealing up the genuine truths of heaven till this time, when Jehovah Jesus, in the tabernacle of his divine human, should in very deed dwell with and in every humble and faithful soul.

In order that each one of us may receive the benefits here offered, it is necessary that we, on our part, endeavour to get our understandings

derstandings into the truths now revealed; live according to the light, that thus we may become children of the light.

To us a child is born, to us a son is given. This is the part of the covenant on the Lord's side. We are not only created by the Lord, but also redeemed; and there is nothing wanting on his part to regenerate our souls, if we on our part love him, believe in him, and obey his commands. If we are thus found fulfilling the conditions on our part, as the Lord is always ready on his part, then the Lord, who in his grace and mercy before was only, as it were, standing without, comes within; in our wills then is this man-child born, as love divine enlivening all our affections; and in our understandings is this son given, as truth divine enlightening all our thoughts. This is the very end for which the Lord descended, that we might be able to conquer the evils of our nature, put off the old man of sin and iniquity, embrace all that is good and true from the Lord; and then with heart and soul we shall be disposed to receive the grand declarations that

that now follow, as applicable to the one only Lord of angels and men.

The first of which is, The government shall be upon his shoulder: by which is meant, that to him shall be all power; the hand simply meaning power, the arm great power, but the shoulder all power; because on the shoulder is all the force of the body, to bear and carry burdens. And this declaration being spoken, in reference to Jehovah's assuming the human, opens to our view, that all the power, the whole government, in the preservation and conservation of the universe, would no longer depend upon the union existing in creation, whereby the inferior degrees received the Lord's life alone, mediately through the superior, and except the divine had made a more close union of the parts with himself, would have been entirely dissolved. But this breach now is repaired, this wound is healed. The Lord, by coming down to the lowest, and elevating that to the highest, has now power in himself to govern the universe, immediately from himself, as well as by the me-

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mediate connection of one part of creation upon the other; as well as that bond to bind heaven and earth together, he has framed the threefold cord in himself of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which cannot be broken to all eternity, let men or devils do their worst; whereby he is able to display his omnipotence, in the preservation of the universe entire; and brought that omnipotence down to his creature's liberty and rationality, which is the grand fundamental principle for which he took the government upon his shoulder.

We now come to the names which he so emphatically bears. *His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.* Upon which emphatic and glorious names, let us suffer ourselves freely to meditate; and may the illustrious personage, in whom alone they all meet, open our eyes, to see himself, as the alone object here testified concerning.

In

In order to which, it is necessary that we observe, what we are to understand by a name, and by calling a name, in the Word; namely, denoting the quality of a person or thing. Hence, when our text says of the child Jesus, that his name shall be called, it implies, that such was his nature and quality as the names after-mentioned import. That the names given to the Lord in the Word, denote his qualities, may be evident from the name Jesus being given him, signifying a saviour; for this very reason, because he shall save his people from their sins.

The first name characteristic of the quality of the God now manifested in flesh, is, that he shall be called Wonderful. If we take this name or quality to the essential divine, as in himself, it is certainly not only beyond our reach, but also of the highest angel in heaven, there to attempt to comprehend; it being impossible for the finite to fathom the infinite. Behind this scene the curious eye had better never attempt to look; because it is an unfathomable ocean, in which the mind is sure to be lost. It appears as if

the highest stretch the mind of man can take to the Lord, is in regard to the union of the divine and the human; that is, in what manner the divine came down to the human, and how the human elevated itself to the divine, so as at length to become inseparably one with it; but which can alone be done by those who have trod the path the Lord went before them, in regeneration; and then it is only a very faint sketch, but which, like a bud, may be ever opening new glories. There is nothing that can be comprehended fully and properly by us; that is, there is nothing that falls within the light of our understanding, but the Lord's divine proceeding, according to our receptions of which, those sketches of the divine human open to our minds, every new scene filling us with wondrous astonishment; for therein is most undoubtedly the highest intellectual feast that can be enjoyed by man.

The Lord is also wonderful in all his works, and in all his ways; for who by searching, in any one point, can find out the Almighty to perfection? If, for instance, we
take

take a view of creation; if we extend our ideas beyond this little world of our's, and consider, that boundless space contains unnumbered worlds; that every fixed star is a sun to some other system; and that all these worlds and suns roll on according to their order of creation in succession, order, and harmony: if we look on these worlds, and see the care, the constant care of a wise Providence over all the inhabitants, providing his creatures their proper food; nay, that Providence not only extending itself to the general concerns of kingdoms and states, of towns and cities, but to the most minute particulars of the lives and conduct of all; so that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father pleases; how shall we not pronounce the God, that made and keeps the whole in order, connection, and preservation, at the same time deigns to undertake conducting our meanest affairs; I say, how can we not pronounce him Wonderful? It is impossible otherwise to do, if our minds are at all elevated thus to behold him.

If

If from creation we pass on to the works of redemption and regeneration, here we may delight our souls with wonders upon wonders, continually opening to our ravished eyes. Here we may behold an incarnate God, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, passing thirty-three years here below of trials, affliction, and dire temptations from hell, for our sakes; and from his divinity within, which was always near at hand to sustain the human in every conflict, at length conquer hell, lead captivity captive, and by so doing glorify the human, that is, unite it to the divine, whereby he becomes a redeemer to eternity, that is, a regenerator of every man who flies to him for refuge, from his sins and iniquities; and all because his wondrous mercy and love towards his creature, man, endureth for ever: many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods drown it. But I must be brief, and hasten to

The second name, by which our Lord is called in our text, is *the Counsellor*. And here it will be profitable for us to throw
aside

aside from our minds, as much as possible, the old idea that the Lord is a counsellor in consequence of having appeased his Father's wrath; because it is an idea which destroys that fundamental of all doctrine, that God is one in essence and in person; and necessarily makes a multiplication of Gods in the mind, or separates the divine from the human: in either case, there is left no other idea of the Deity, than as a phantom floating in the imagination; and nothing real or substantial for the love or faith of the humble christian to fix his heart upon: but that state is now no longer in the Lord's New Church; she has her God, in consequence of seeing the union of the divine and the human, in the person of Jesus Christ, always before her; from whence she beholds him a counsellor and an advocate, as to his human, that being the door whereby the divine may be approached; for no man (as our Lord himself declares) has seen God, that is, the naked divine, at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has manifested him; the human is the way to the divine, as the advocate

cate or counsellor; because whosoever approacheth the human, in whom is the divine, approacheth the divine in the human, which is alone the divine in manifestation. Therefore, now the axe is laid to the root of the tree; it is now no longer allowable to have confidence in the Father, that he will have mercy for the sake of the Son; but the Word now is, John iii. 36, *He that believeth on the Son has everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

The Lord is also a counsellor in his Word, for therein we have him always present with us, directing us in the way we ought to walk, to be happy in time and to eternity. He there counsels us to abstain from all that is evil and false in thought, word, and deed, that we may not render ourselves obnoxious to the attendant punishment; and to love, believe, and act every thing good and true, that he may fill us with his heaven: for this end are the many invitations held out to us, have we but regard sufficient to our eternal welfare, to attend to
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the heavenly call; hence particularly in Rev. iii. 18, he says, *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see:* gold being celestial love, white raiment heavenly truths, to buy meaning appropriating them to ourselves as our own, and anointing thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see, doing all things with a single eye, elevated to the Lord the fountain of all light, and consequently of all life to men.

The next quality in our text, predicated of Jehovah in human form, is *the mighty God*; the Lord always being called God in the Old Testament, in relation to divine truth, as he is called Jehovah in relation to divine love; inasmuch as all power is in divine truth derived from divine good, and it was the Lord as divine truth that more particularly assumed the human, in which he displayed such amazing proofs of heroism; therefore he is not only called God, but the

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mighty

mighty God, or as it should be rendered,
GOD, HERO.

The wonderful proofs of his power, which he displayed in the work of redemption and salvation, and also in effecting a judgment at the time of his first, and also at his second advent, we cannot enter minutely into in this discourse; suffice it to say, that there was no want of power with him to effect the purposes for which he came; because it pleased the Father, the essential divine, that in him, the human, should all fulness dwell. We also have his own explicit declaration to the fact, when he declared after his resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 18, *All power is given into my hands, in heaven and in earth.* Hence whilst in our text he is called God, in relation to essential divine truth, he is called Mighty, or Hero, in respect to his human in the ultimates: for although the Lord was the Man, as to first principles, from all eternity, yet it was impossible he could subdue the rebellious spirits of hell, without he had also come into the last or lowest, which then was all defilement, that he might himself be enabled
to

to come even within the infernal sphere, approach them, and as he approached them by the maternal human, conquer and subjugate them in consequence of the divine, his life and soul diffusing it's glories through the human; it is thus we see the Lord become the hero, and the man of war.

In the next place, we behold the child born, the son given, to be *the everlasting Father*, or as it should be rendered, *the Father of eternity*. I know there are many who acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as a father, in an accommodated sense, namely, as the father of his people; but certainly it only wants the understanding to be exercised, and it must be seen, that our text speaks of the Lord as the Father in a larger latitude; not only as the father of his people, but as the Father of eternity itself. And certainly our Lord preaches the same doctrine when he tells us, John x. 30, *I and the Father are one*. Also, John xiv. 9, 10, *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Believeest thou not that I am in*

the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. The Lord being called, by name, the Father of eternity, is no more than he himself declared to John in the Rev. i. 8, *I am ALPHA and Omega, the BEGINNING and ending, saith the Lord, which is, WHICH WAS, and which is to come.*

The last name which we find attributed to the Lord in our text is, *the Prince of peace*; because from him alone is all divine truth, as well as divine good, to angels and men. He is called a prince, in relation to divine truth; for the same reason he is called a king, and peace is attributed to him from the union of divine truth with divine good in his own person; which when completed, he sat down in peace on his throne, having finished the work which he came to do; and which also and alone flows to man, as goodness and truth are conjoined in the heart. Heavenly peace springing from the Lord as the Prince of peace, being an interior blessedness resulting

ing from the conjunction of the Lord with heaven and the church; therefore also from the conjunction of goodness and truth in the breasts and minds of those who are in heaven and the church; in consequence of which conjunction the warfare is ceased, the evils and false spirits of hell give up the combat; discords and wars in the mind are at an end, the soul enters into the sabbatical state, he then sits under his own vine, and his own fig-tree, and none makes him afraid; there is nothing to hurt or destroy any more in all the Lord's holy mountain; from that peace flows all fructification of good affections in the will, and all multiplication of truths in the understanding; hence the fulness of heavenly intelligence and wisdom; and because this conjunction of heaven in the soul—this peace after combat with, and victories gained over our spiritual foes, is from the Lord alone in his divine human, in which he is the Prince, the Lord, being all in all to man in his divine human; therefore he may, with great propriety, be called in our text *the Prince of peace*.

To

To conclude: let us never forget, that the Lord cannot be the prince of peace to us, but so far as we suffer him to come and take up his mansion within our breasts; there is no peace from him who is the prince of peace, but as we enter the marriage union of goodness and truth from him, because thereby we are enabled to give up our own ways and our own thoughts, and without reserve leave our cause in his hand, put our confidence in him, at the same time using all means, that an opening Providence may put into our power. It is true here in this world, this pilgrimage-state, the faithful christian must expect to have his evenings, as well as his mornings and noons; nay sometimes he may very near verge to the night, because regeneration is a progressive work, and the christian is only suffered as it were to lay down his weapons of warfare, at the end of a combat or temptation, that thereby, having some respite from the field of battle, he may prepare himself to enter again. But to such our Lord says, as his true disciples, in order to cheer up their hearts amidst the conflicts of the way, lest they should totally

sink into despondency, *In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world; I will not leave you comfortless, I will come again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Now to our Lord Jesus Christ be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

END OF SERMON II.

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